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SUBJECT: RE-EMERGENCE OF CNDP'S NKUNDA WING?

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Samuel V. Brock for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Former CNDP Spokesman Bertrand Bisimwa recently told us that the "real CNDP," i.e., the Nkunda wing was poised to reenter the DRC political fray. Claiming that the Bosco wing had no authority to sign the March 23 agreement with the GDRC, Bisimwa presented us with a memo outlining the real CNDP's demands, which included the release of former CNDP leader Laurent Nkunda, as well as traditional calls for refugee/IDP resettlement and inter-ethnic reconciliation. "Real peace," according to Bisimwa, would only come to the Kivus when the GDRC and the real CNDP negotiate. Bisimwa maintained that the overwhelming majority of CNDP rank and file remained loyal to Nkunda, adding that integrated CNDP commanders "would not be able to control" their troops, if Nkunda is not eventually released. Any re-emergence of an armed Nkunda wing of the CNDP bears watching. However, we believe that the constellation of forces opposed to such a re-emergence is extremely formidable and the level of support for Nkunda within the CNDP rank and file is questionable. End summary.

¶2. (C) We recently met with former CNDP spokesman and Nkunda confidante Bertrand Bisimwa at his request. Bisimwa said he wanted to give the USG a heads-up that the "real CNDP," i.e., the Nkunda wing, was about to re-emerge as a political force in the DRC. According to Bisimwa, the real CNDP had two demands: the "modalities" of the CNDP's integration into the FARDC needed to be worked out; and the political issues, which underlay the CNDP's rebellion, had not been addressed. Bisimwa claimed that, in January, the CNDP agreed that the modalities of integration would be finalized only when planned operations against the FDLR had concluded (Note: We have no independent verification of Bisimwa's claim. End note.). When pressed to elaborate on the political demands, Bisimwa raised perennial concerns about refugee/IDP returns and community reconciliation. But, he also specifically called for the release of Nkunda and his "re-integration" into the FARDC. Paragraph seven lists all of the political demands contained in a memo, which Bisimwa gave to us (previously emailed to AF/C).

¶3. (C) Along with the CNDP demands, Bisimwa volunteered two guarantees. First, the real CNDP would not take any steps "backwards," in particular, its troops would remain in the FARDC. Second, it would not raise any new issues, i.e., issues that had not been on the negotiating table in Nairobi in Fall 2008.

¶4. (C) Bisimwa slammed the current CNDP, maintaining that the group did not really represent the CNDP, so its signature on the March 23 agreement was irrelevant. The memo states that "the March agreement signed between the government and the dissident CNDP is illegitimate and has no obligatory power over anyone in the military or in the political branch

of the movement." Bisimwa argued that the rapprochement between the GDRC and GOR centered solely on bilateral issues and did not deal with the CNDP. "Real peace," in Bisimwa's words would only come to the Kivus when the GDRC negotiates directly with the real CNDP (Comment: Unquestionably, the CNDP, which many observers believed the GOR supported, was a huge bilateral issue between Kinshasa and Kigali, and a major component of the recent rapprochement. End comment.). Qcomponent of the recent rapprochement. End comment.).

15. (C) Bisimwa insisted that the vast majority of CNDP military elements remained loyal to Nkunda. While the real CNDP did not want to reconstitute the CNDP as an independent force, Bisimwa warned that CNDP commanders had kept control of their troops and ensured integration into the FARDC by assuring the rank and file that Nkunda would return after Kimia II concluded. If the military operations stop and Nkunda is not released, Bisimwa claimed that commanders would not be able to "keep their men under control."

16. (SBU) The CNDP memo claims that pre-conditions for re-establishing diplomatic relations between the DRC and Rwanda were the removal of Nkunda and the neutralization of the CNDP. Rwanda, according to the CNDP memo, had begun to view Nkunda, a popular, self-confident Congolese Tutsi in a resource-rich country, as a potential regional rival. Rwandan CHOD James Kabarebe was the alleged "architect of the DRC-Rwandan alliance against the CNDP." The memo claims that "except for a few villainous officers, the CNDP armed branch remains loyal to General Nkunda." In a not-so-veiled threat, the memo announced that "Rwanda will not always be in a position to play the role of a reserve police corps to be

KINSHASA 00000915 002 OF 002

called in anytime the DRC president is faced with political and security challenges."

17. (SBU) The memo elucidates that following demands:

- release of Nkunda and his "reintegration" into the FARDC;
- development of a concerted and systematic framework to govern the repatriation and reintegration of Congolese refugees and IDPs in North and South Kivu;
- these reintegration programs must include a plan for resettlement of people in their respective land;
- development of a program for inter-ethnic reconciliation and peaceful cohabitation;
- reform of the FARDC, as well as other security and intelligence services;
- implementation of a system of good governance, which will deal with corrupt institutions; and
- movement towards developing a system of greater regional autonomy that will increase participatory democracy.

18. (C) Comment: Bisimwa's comments contain some insights, but it seems unlikely that the faction he represents carries much weight. At times he and the memo are seemingly contradictory, e.g., claiming that the "integrated" CNDP units would not leave the FARDC, while at the same time clearly labeling the March 23 agreement as null and void. While we certainly need to closely monitor any effort by the Nkunda wing to reconstitute an independent armed force in the Kivus, we do not believe such a threat is inevitable or imminent for several reasons. Conventional wisdom has always been that most rank and file CNDP were more loyal to the undiplomatic and less flamboyant Bosco Ntanganda, who was generally viewed with more empathy than was Nkunda. Bisimwa's claims, therefore, that practically all CNDP cadres support Nkunda should be viewed with skepticism. Additionally, the Nkunda wing does not have any allies left

in the region. There is a formidable array of forces opposed to his re-emergence on the scene: GDRC, GOR, Bosco wing of the CNDP, and FDLR. Perhaps, as Bisimwa intimated, there are elements in Rwanda who are unhappy with Nkunda's fate, but our knowledge here in Kinshasa is limited. Finally, there is no indication that integrated CNDP elements have fared badly in the FARDC; on the contrary, there are numerous complaints that CNDP units continue to operate with virtual autonomy from the FARDC. Bisimwa's message appears to be a desperate call for Nkunda's rehabilitation, although Nkunda, at least for now, is "yesterday's man."

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